

at Mrs Thayer's

Delivered

A N

O R A T I O N

DELIVERED

MARCH 5th, 1779

NOTATION

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M. A. R. E. L. I. N. E.



A N
O R A T I O N,

DELIVERED

M A R C H 5th, 1779,

A T T H E

REQUEST OF THE INHABITANTS

O F T H E

T O W N O F B O S T O N ;

T O

COMMEMORATE THE BLOODY TRAGEDY

O F T H E

F I F T H O F M A R C H, 1770.

BY WILLIAM TUDOR, ESQUIRE.

— Sed et illa propago

Contemptrix superum sevaeque avidissima caedis

Et violenta fuit.

Or. M. L. I. F. S.

Whatever secondary props may rise

From politics, to build the public peace,

The basis is, the manners of the land.



YOUNG.

B O S T O N :

PRINTED BY EDES & GILL, IN COURT-STREET.

M.DCC.LXXIX.

AT a Meeting of the Freeholders and other Inhabitants of the
Town of BOSTON, duly qualified and legally warned in
public Town-Meeting assembled at Faneuil-Hall, on Friday the
fifth Day of March 1779.

UPON a Motion made, VOTED, that the
Hon. John Hancock, Esq;
William Cooper, Esq;
Mr. Bartholomew Kneeland,
Perez Morton, Esq;
John Lowell, Esq;
Ezekiel Price, Esq;
John Scollay, Esq;

Be and hereby are appointed a Committee to wait upon
WILLIAM TUDOR, Esq; and in the Name of the Town
to thank him for the spirited and elegant O R A T I O N
delivered by him at their Request, in Commemoration of the
horrid MASSACRE perpetrated on the Evening of the fifth of
March, 1770, by a Party of Soldiers of the XXIXth Regiment,
under the Command of Capt. Thomas Preston, and to request
of him a Copy thereof for the Press.

Attest. William Cooper, Town-Clerk.

GENTLEMEN,

CONCEIVING that nothing short of Impossibility ought
to dispense with that prompt Obedience which Individuals
owe to the public Voice, this Oration was composed and deliver-
ed in Sickness: In the same Sentiment I consent to the Publi-
cation of it.

I am, Gentlemen, with Respect,

Your most obedient humble Servant.

MARCH 6, 1779;

WILLIAM TUDOR.

ORATION.

FATHERS, COUNTRYMEN, FRIENDS,

“**T**HAT man was born to delude and be deluded ; to believe whatever is taught, and bear whatsoever is imposed ;” are political dogmas which have long afforded matter for exultation and security to dignified villains, from the powergrasping monarch, to the lowest minion of office. But however justified they may have been, and now are, by the passive conduct of the greatest part of mankind, you, my fellow-citizens, thank God, you are an exception to their truth. The numerous, the respectable assembly which now crowd this hallowed temple, prove you an exalted exception to maxims as disgraceful as they are general. Ever vigilantly attentive to the sacred, unalienable rights of man ; equally studious in the glorious principles

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ples of liberty as intrepidly determined to preserve inviolate the inestimable privileges she bestows ; you are now convened, not more to commemorate this anniversary, than solemnly to renew the resolves, which freedom, wisdom, virtue, honour inspire : And not barely to resolve, but I trust, steadily to pursue the execution of resolutions which have resulted from deliberate investigation and full conviction.

To so intelligent, so well informed an auditory, it must be unnecessary to deduce the origin of civil society, which, founded in reciprocal advantage, and begun in social virtue, on the mutual necessities and mutual assistance of individuals built the combined happiness of the community—a happiness thus instituted, nothing but public spirit and a union of force and of council can preserve : I must therefore request your indulgence whilst I rather point out those evils which the concurrent experience of ages and nations prove to be subversive of every good proposed from civil compact. Little solicitous of rhetorical applause, I shall offer you my sentiments as they arise warm from a heart devoted to the interests of this my parent country, in language that becomes a freeman to use when addressing a free assembly. *

SIMILAR causes will forever operate like effects in the political and moral, as well as in the physical world : Those vices which ruined the illustrious republics of Greece, and the mighty commonwealth

* *Rara temporum felicitas, ubi sentire quæ velis, et quæ sentias dicere licet.*
TACITUS.

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wealth of Rome ; which are now with rapid progression ruining Great-Britain, so late the first Kingdom of Europe, must eventually ruin every State, where their deleterious influence is suffered to prevail. Need I add that luxury, corruption, and standing armies are those destructive efficient?

LUXURY, that syren luxury, whose treacherous song ever charms her deluded votaries to destruction, or to infamy, no sooner finds admittance into a State than she becomes the parent of innumerable evils, public and domestic ; her contagious influence is soon felt in society, her baneful effects discovered by a general dissipation of manners and a declension of private virtue, which begets effeminate habits, and by a natural gradation a base pliability of spirit.

LUXURY is ever the foe of independance, for at the same time that it creates * artificial wants it precludes the means of satisfying them. It first makes men necessitous, and then dependant. It first unfits men for patriotic energies, and soon teaches them to consider *public virtue as a public jest.*

AT such a period, corruption finds an easy access to men's hearts. To the promotion of interested pursuits, and the gratification of voluptuous wishes, a ready sacrifice is made of the general good at the shrine of power. Then slumbers that virtuous jealousy of public men and public measures, which was wont to scrutinize not only

* Si ad naturam vives nunquam eris pauper ; si ad opinionem nunquam div :
Exiguum natura desiderat ; opinio immensum. SEN. Ep. 16.

S A N O R A T I O N.

only actions but motives : Then nods that active zeal, which, with eagle-eye watched, and with nervous arm defended the constitution. Every day new inroads are made upon public liberty, while incroachments like temptations, grow more frequent and more dangerous in proportion as the power of resistance decreases. Thus before a nation is completely deprived of freedom, she must be fitted for slavery by her vices.

GENERALLY, but not always, for we have known a people ruled by a despot, who from a private station rose to uncontrolled dominion, at a time when they were sternly virtuous. And this mode of introducing bondage is ever to be apprehended at the close of a successful struggle for liberty, when a triumphant army, elated with victories, and headed by a popular General, may become more formidable than the tyrant that has been expelled. Witness the last century in the English history. Witness the aspiring CROMWELL !

THIS audacious citizen intrusted by his country with the command of her armies to chastize the man whom previous folly * had dethroned a King, and as such had presumed to treat his subjects, as all Kings

* If a man in private life, finds his eldest son an idiot or a rascal, he may dispose of his estate among his other children : But if the heir apparent (in hereditary monarchies) to a crown, an inheritance in which millions are interested, turns out to be a blockhead or a villain, still he must be King, because such is the line of succession established by law.—Hence the few Princes who have not been either the scourge or disgrace of the kingdoms they have ruled.

Kings ever will do when they can, with contempt and injury, had no sooner dispatched the foolish imperious Monarch, than he attempted to succeed him : With a little management, he soon found his army as disposed to *regify* him as they had been to depose Charles. With these mercenary associates at his heels, he appeared in the Synod of the State, and dared with force, displace the most glorious band of patriots that ever led a tyrant from his throne to a scaffold. Not content with this enormous outrage upon the constitution, this annihilating stroke upon the tottering liberties of his country, for a time to keep up the form of a popular government, he convened an House of Commons, constituted entirely of his own creatures. They met, and in a few months discovered that they were utterly unequal to the posts they were raised to, they therefore petitioned their master to dissolve them. Cromwell granted their request—and became sole tyrant of three kingdoms.—Tyrant—for of what consequence is it by what style or under what modification despotism operates to the public misery—Dictator, King, Protector,—it is not the appellation we reprobate, though even that we should guard against—but the thing. Who but must own that Cromwell under the name of Protector, was as absolute a despot as he could have been with any other title ?

THE first CÆSAR affords us another instance among the thousands which history holds up to our view, to teach us what bold and unprincipled spirits have effected by the aid of armies. This ambitious subject having been for several years engaged in the humane, the *soldierly* employment of slaughtering his fellow men

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and

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and in extending his conquests over countries which he had not even a pretence to invade ; this Cæsar who boasted that he had slain a million of men † was at length ordered home by the senate to answer to some charges against his conduct. He knew that at such an interview his sword would be his ablest advocate. He therefore led his veteran legions, "*nothing loth*," against his country ; passed the rubicon ; fought his way to Rome ; plunged a dagger in her vitals ; impiously trampled on her dearest rights ; and seized on empire crimsoned, execrable paricide ! crimsoned with the richest blood of Rome's best citizens !

Too late the patriot poniard reach'd the traitor's heart. Cæsar fell—alas ! the republic had fallen before—one tyrant dead, like the Hydra-head cut off, up started more. Rome changed her tyrants, but the tyranny remained. The same army that had enabled Julius to triumph over the liberties of his country, led the cars of OCTAVIUS, ANTHONY and LEPIDUS through seas of Roman blood, and bad the cursed triumvirate divide an enslaved world.

If Rome could have been saved, BRUTUS and his virtuous associates would have saved her ; but a standing army, and a perpetual dictator, were, and ever will prove too hard for the patriotic few. Learn hence, my countrymen, that a State may sink so low

† Plutarch says that Cæsar could boast, that he had slain a Million of men, gave a Million their liberty, and made a Million prisoners.

Vid. Plat. in vit. Cæs.

low in slavery that even virtue itself cannot retrieve her. From these examples, prudence dictates—*resist beginnings*. A free and wise people will never suffer any citizen to become too popular—much less too powerful. A man may be formidable to the constitution even by his virtues. §

BUT why do I keep your attention fixed on remote transactions? Our own times furnish additional and convincing proofs of the destructive consequences of political corruption and mercenary armies.

SWEEDEN, the bravest, hardiest, freest nation of the north—in one day—in one hour—may every freeman execrate the tyrant--SWEEDEN in one hour was plunged from the distinguished heights of liberty into abject vassalage. What ties can bind a King? Scarce had GUSTAVUS the THIRD ascended the throne of limited monarchy; scarce had the roofs of the senate house ceased to reverberate the insidious accents of his inauguration speech * whilst

§ The extravagant Panegyrics that have been paid to some of our principal military characters, in Strains scarcely short of adoration, are unworthy the manly sentiments and independent principles which should distinguish the inhabitants of a free country. If our heroes must be deified, we ought at least to wait until death hath placed their characters beyond dispute, and our imagination translated them to Heaven. The Romans (while they remained free) never admitted a man to an Apotheosis, until thro' the gates of death he had reached immortality, and been personally introduced to a seat in an assembly of the Gods.

* As this speech is in but few people's hands, I believe, in this country, it is inserted at large, not only because it is fraught with excellent advice, but also to shew how little reliance is to be placed on coronation speeches. The

whilst yet the venerable representatives of their country were fondly anticipating the blessings that would arise from the reign of

The King of Sweden's speech to the States on the 1st of June, 1772:

You are this day assembled, in order to confirm in the manner of your ancestors, the band of union which ties you to me, and me to you, and both to the whole commonwealth; we must therefore remember, with the most sensible gratitude, the benevolence of the almighty, who has order'd things so, that this very ancient kingdom of the Swedes and Goths is still existing, after so many foreign, as well as national shocks, and that I, in the throne of my ancestors, can yet address free and independent States.

Assured of your hearts, most sincerely proposing to merit them, and to fix my throne upon your love and felicity, the public engagement which you are going to enter into, would, in my opinion, be needless, if ancient custom and the law of Sweden did not require it of you. Unhappy the King who wants the tie of oaths to secure himself on the throne, and who, not assured of the hearts of his subjects, is constrain'd to reign only by the force of laws, when he cannot by the love of his subjects!

I need not put you in mind of the weightiness of the engagement you are going to take; the States of Sweden know best the extent of their duty to themselves and the commonwealth; may concord and harmony ever unite your hearts; may foreign views and private gain ever be sacrificed to public interest; may this alone be a perpetual bond of union amongst you; and may the ambition of any part of you, never raise any such disturbances as may endanger the freedom and independency of the whole commonwealth!

Gentlemen of the House of Nobles,

Preserve always the honour and intrepidity of your ancestors; be an example to your fellow-citizens; and, as you are the first order of the kingdom, be also the first in virtue and love of your country.

Good Men of the Reverend Order of Clergy,

May mutual friendship and peace, obedience to the laws, reverence to God and the King, bear witness to me and the country, of your zeal in the execution of the sacred office with which you are intrusted!

Good

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of so wise, so good a King—the unblushing paricide surrounded with an armed host the temple in which the senate was assembled, planted his cannon against the gates, and with the swords of his guards at the throats of the senators, demanded immediate absolution from his coronation oath, by which he had most sacredly bound himself to preserve inviolate the laws and liberties of the Sweedes ! who could have thought a stripling, whose language breathed the glowing sentiments of enthusiastic generosity so natural to youth, could with such facility set at defiance all that is held sacred, honorable and obligatory among men ! but the lust of domination, so natural to human nature, will ever prove too hard for the checks of conscience and the dictates of righteousness, when a favourable opportunity presents to gratify it. Gustavus knowing that the army were ready to assist his iniquitous

C

designs

Good Men of the respectable Order of Burghers,

Strive always with your fellow subjects who shall contribute the most to the public good ; may the fruits of the extensive share which belongs to you, be general credit and confidence, useful institutions, frugal living, and moderate gain, which lead to sure and certain wealth !

Good Men of the worthy Order of Peasants,

May piety, diligence, temperance, and old Sweedish faith and modesty, be the strongest confirmation of the honour always due to that order which gives subsistence to all the others ; an honour which the Sweedish peasants have at all times attain'd.

This is all I ask of you, when you observe this, you perform in the best manner, that duty to me and your country, which according to the Sweedish laws, I now call upon you to confirm by oath.

For an historical account of this revolution, vid. gentleman's magazine for 1772, page 397. &c. For the Sweedish constitution, vid. the abbot Vertot.

designs (as all standing armies are to promote despotism, because under such a system of rule, soldiers must be necessary and consequently favored.) the barriers raised by justice and his plighted faith to Sweeden, became slight indeed. Force backed inclination, and Gustavus changed circumscribed authority, for unconfined sovereignty †

LET us now turn our eyes to that nation whom we once did love, and with whom we had yet been friends had not an unparalleled series of folly and cruelty compelled us to renounce the pleasing relation-ship. A short retrospect of whose public conduct subsequent to the last War will afford many and important instructions.

IN 1763 peace was restored after a war of seven years successfully waged in every quarter of the globe. At that period what an unrivalled figure did Great-Britain stand amongst the nations! Great beyond all former example, in arms, in commerce and in wealth. Not a corner of the earth but had witnessed her achievements. Wheresoever she directed her armies, victory and conquest attended; whilst her irresistible navy, thundering over every ocean, not only subdued, but annihilated the fleets of her enemies.

TRIUMPHANT in war, nor less distinguished in peace. In most of the polite, in all the useful arts and sciences, superior to her neighbours.

† For a compleat system of despotism, see the *Lex regia* of Denmark, constituted by Frederick 3d in 1665, and published by Christian 5th, in 1683.

neighbours. In commerce unequalled ; not a sea but bore, not a wind but wafted her countless ships, laden with the riches of the earth, and made her crouded ports the marts of the world. Late glorious nation, How are thou fallen, how lost ! from so envied, so stupendous an height, by the perverted will of thy infatuated monarch, and the pernicious counsels of his nefarious ministers. Driven to the fearful edge of ruin, we now behold Thee tottering o'er the gulph of annihilation, whilst France and her allies urge Thee over the irremeable steep !

WHEN we consider the capital defects in the English constitution—the character of her present weak and ambitious monarch—the luxury, dissipation and venality of her influential men, we shall cease to wonder at her declension and present circumstances.

IN a limited monarchy, where the prince as supreme executive magistrate, and first branch of the legislature, is invested with the important prerogative of making peace and war ; is constituted the sole fountain of honor, and becomes the exclusive disposer of every lucrative and honorable appointment, civil, ecclesiastic and military ; his influence becomes too enormous to be compatible with the public liberty : But if to such extravagant powers (by a fatal error in the Constitution, placed in the hands of the Prince) he should superadd a detestable system of corruption to bribe the Representatives of the people (a system which during the reign of his present *Britannic Majesty* hath been urged

to

to its utmost possible extent) the worst species of vassalage must ensue. That equipoise between the respective branches of the Legislature (in which the seeming, the theoretic excellence of the English Constitution consists) will be totally destroyed; the Executive will involve the powers of the Legislative, and whilst the letter and formalities of the Constitution are retained, its spirit and intendment will be totally lost. *An absolutely arbitrary*, with the forms of a *free* Government (that worst and surest of all tyrannies) will gradually succeed and be finally established, unless a total revolution is happily effected by the timely exertions of the people, before the Despot has strengthened himself with a mercenary army, and forever closed their chains.

BUT this tyranny is already established in Great-Britain: for what hopes can Britons entertain of effecting a revolution, whilst the Crown by the multiplicity of gifts in its power, can maintain an infamous majority in each House of Parliament to legalize, and a standing army to enforce its projects, however impious, inhuman or unjust. In vain, a few wise and virtuous men see and lament their dishonorable situation—An army of forty thousand soldiers in time of peace, and a still more numerous band of placemen and pensioners properly disposed throughout the kingdom, effectually stifle in their birth every effort of patriotism to restore the constitution to its primæval principles.

SUCH is the boasted Constitution, such the Prince, and such the present condition of the people of Britain. Unhappy nation,
thus

thus constitutionally enslaved—thus legally undone ! Unworthy descendants of illustrious ancestors—thus to suffer your most essential rights to be bartered away, your Government not only corrupted, but perverted to purposes diametrically opposite to its original intention. A Parliament at first constituted to watch over and preserve your rights and immunities from the encroaching steps of ambitious Princes, you have permitted to become an engine in the hands of royalty, the more effectually to abridge or nullify those rights. A Parliament constituted the stewards of your property, who instead of guarding it from the insatiable grasp of royal avidity, you patiently see lavishly indulging the utmost extravagance of regal profusion ; granting enormous sums for effecting the most pernicious purposes ; traiterously leaguings with the servants of the Crown in loading you with intolerable taxes, and, sharers in the spoil, prodigally complying with the most unbounded demands of ministerial rapacity, while they at the same time treacherously unite to screen the most infamous defaulters of the public money. Instead of bravely drawing your swords in defence of your freedom and national honor, you first tamely acquiesced in an insidious and ignominious † law by which you were basely disarmed like slaves, and then from necessity submitted to keeping on foot, in time of peace, a standing army, that in time of war had been raised professedly for the defence of the national territories from foreign attacks—an army which you now behold, without shame and without

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† Vid. Statutes at large—Particularly 2. Geo. 3. ch. 25. and 10th Geo. 3d. ch. 19. and Black. Com. B. 4. ch. 27.—For the game and forest laws.

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without regret, spreading devastation and horror over a late peaceful and happy country ; and having at length dismembered the empire, are now attempting to reduce us to the most infamous and most miserable of all conditions, that of being the conquered vassals of your weak, vindictive, despotic Monarch.

DEGENERATE sons of great forefathers ! Is it possible that you can console yourselves for the loss of essential rights, because you still retain the empty privilege of lampooning your King and mobbing his Ministers, whilst you are destitute of that public spirit and solid virtue which should purge your corrupted Government and reform your wretched Constitution

FROM subjection to a government thus defective and corrupt, and thus vilely administered, what freeman would not struggle for an emancipation ? But if there is an American present who can yet secretly wish for a re-union with this nation and a share in her ideal privileges, let him for a moment consider the innumerable indignities, which for fifteen years back have been offered us by this haughty power, added to the savage barbarities which they have exercised in every part of America where their army have made any progress, and he must blush at the spiritless, the ignoble sentiment.

IN 1764 the plan for raising a revenue from this country was resolved on by the British Ministry, and THEIR obsequious Parliament were instructed to pass an act for that purpose. Not
content

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content with having for a century directed the entire commerce of America and centered its profits in their own island ; thereby deriving from the Colonies every substantial advantage which the situation and transmarine distance of the country could afford them : not content with appointing the principal officers in the different Governments, while the King had a negative upon every law that was enacted : not content with our supporting the whole charge of our municipal establishments, although their own creatures held the chief posts therein : not content with laying external duties upon our mutilated and shackled commerce, they, by this statute, attempted to rob us of even the curtailed property, the hard-earned peculium which still remained to us—to create a revenue for the support of a fleet and army, in reality to overawe and secure our subjection, not (as they insidiously pretended) to protect our trade or defend our frontiers ; the first of which they annoyed, and the latter deserted.

AFTER repealing this imperious edict, *not* because it was unjust in principle, *but* inexpedient in exercise, they proceeded to declare, by a public act of the whole Legislature, that we had no property but what was at their disposal, and that Americans in future were to hold their privileges and lives solely on the tenure of the good will and pleasure of a British Parliament. Acts soon followed correspondent to this righteous determination, which, not quadrating with American ideas of right, justice and reason, a fleet and army were sent to give them that force, which laws receive when promulgated from the mouths of cannon, or at the points of bayonets.

WE

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WE then first saw our harbour crowded with hostile ships, our streets with soldiers—soldiers accustomed to consider military prowess as the standard of excellence, and vain of the splendid pomp attendant on regular armies, they contemptuously looked down on our peaceful orders of citizens. Conceiving themselves more powerful they assumed a superiority which they did not feel; and whom they could not but envy they effected to despise. Perhaps knowing they were sent, and believing they were able to subdue us, they thought it was not longer necessary to observe any measures with slaves—hence that fastidious arrogance in the carriage of the officers—hence that licentiousness and brutality in the common soldiers, which at length broke out with insufferable violence, and proceeding to personal insults and outrageous assaults on the inhabitants, soon roused them to resentment, and produced the catastrophe which we now commemorate. The immediate horrors of that distressful night * have been so often and so strikingly painted, that I shall not again wring your feeling bosoms with the affecting recital: to the faithful pen of history I leave them to be represented as the horrid prelude to those more extensive tragedies, which under the direction of a most obdurate and sanguinary Prince have since been acted in every corner of America where his armies have been able to penetrate.

OUR

* —Heeaten vocat altera, sævam
altera Tisiphonen serpentes, atque videres
Infernas errare Canes; Lunamque rubentem,
Ne foret his Tellis, post magna latere sepulchra.

Hor. L. 1. S. 9.

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OUR Citizens who fell on that memorable night, falling bequeathed us this salutary lesson written indeliably with their blood. *Confusion, murders, and misery must ever be the consequence of mercenary standing armies cantoned in free cities.* §

MY Countrymen, suffer not the slaughtered brethren we now lament to have bled in vain ; let us forever retain the important lesson, and they will not have ineffectually fallen. Security shall spring from their tombs, and their deaths preserve the lives of citizens yet unborn. Succeeding generations shall celebrate the æra of this anniversary as the epoch of American triumph, not as a day of sadness ; and future patriots nobly envy the death of those, who dying taught their countrymen experimental wisdom.

§ ——— Et altis Urbibus ultima
Stetere Cause cur perirent
Funditus imprimetque Muris
Hostile Aratrum Exercitus Insolens

Mar. Lib. 1. Car. 16.

THE NATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARCHIVES

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